



The Journey

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Indiana Disproportionality Committee

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<http://www.in.gov/cji/youth/idc.html>

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Indiana Disproportionality Committee

The IDC continues its momentum to achieve its mission to *create equality within Indiana's child welfare, juvenile justice, education and mental health systems and reduce the overrepresentation of children of color involved in these systems.*

The goals established by each IDC subcommittee drive the momentum of the larger group. The Community Awareness Subcommittee invites you to visit the IDC site to view our updated look (see web address above). The Training Sub-Committee will soon send a survey via surveymoneky.com. The survey will assess current cultural training practices and curriculum being used in both private and public organizations.

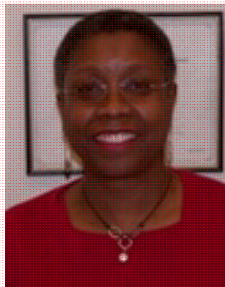
The IDC announced that another *Train the Trainers* session will be held this summer to build up the list of available presenters. We have had a number of requests to present, but have fallen short in the number of persons that are able to speak for IDC. Minimal member participation in the subcommittees also continues to be a barrier towards progress. Please consider attending the *Train the Trainers* session, or joining one of the wonderful subcommittees!

Inside the Statehouse

The issue of disproportionality has made several appearances during the 2007 Indiana legislative session. A bill first introduced by Rep. William Crawford and later inserted into the House Budget will create a Statewide Commission to investigate and find solutions to the issue. The commission will include representatives from a variety of agencies, public and private, and will receive \$125,000 in State funding.

As Chair of the House *Ways and Means* committee, Rep. Crawford served as one of a handful of legislators who drafted the final version of the Budget and ensured that the Disproportionality Commission wasn't sacrificed. In a recent discussion, he assured IDC members of his commitment to ending the overrepresentation of children of color in human service systems. Thanks to his diligence, the commission will soon begin to form and will involve many key administrators from State agencies. We'll keep you posted as to the progress of the commission, and how IDC will be involved!

FIVE QUESTIONS WITH CLARA ANDERSON



Clara Anderson is the Executive Vice-President of *Children's Bureau, Inc.* and the Chair of the IDC.

What does 'disproportionality' mean to you? Beyond the agreed upon definition, where one racial/ethnic group is represented at a rate different from that within the general population, disproportionality means "unfairness". Whether it be over- or under- representation, the group is typically not getting what they need or what others in the same situation are getting.

What have your personal experiences been with the issue? My personal experience dates back some 30 years, when I became involved with Black adoptions. At that time, the existing system insisted that Black people didn't adopt. The truth was that Black people had been adopting children since the days of slavery, but through a more informal system. They did not rely upon the formal system they felt they'd not been invited to participate in and did not trust. My professional effort became recruiting families to adopt the growing number of Black Children entering the system.

How does the issue impact your profession? Disproportionality impacts every aspect of social work. Our society doesn't recognize the issue, however, or accept responsibility for its' existence. Therefore, training must equip new social work professionals to influence injustice wherever it exists. Until we are able to find solutions to disparities, we won't achieve a humane society.

Why do you think disproportionality is happening? There isn't a simple, easy cause or effect. I wish there was. There are multiple causes, such as individual and systemic bias, all of the "ism"s (class, race, sex), poverty, and a social devaluing of cultural differences.

What can we do to solve this issue? Make honest assessments of each of our personal involvement in the problem. Start where we are right now by making a commitment to eliminating bias in every aspect of our lives - home, work, school - with the people and places that we touch.

Good Readings and References

Synthesis of Research on Disproportionality in Child Welfare: An Update

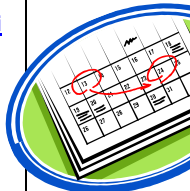
By: Robert Hill, Ph.D

http://www.cssp.org/uploadFiles/Disproportionality_Paper_Bob_Hill.pdf

The focus of the paper is to summarize the current research findings of racial disproportionality and disparities in treatment of services within the child welfare systems.

IDC 2006 Annual Report

<http://www.in.gov/cji/youth/FINAL%20DMC%20End%20of%20the%20Year1.pdf>



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- *Prevent Child Abuse Indiana Conference*: May 7th-8th contact Dee Mazza at 317-542-7002 for more information.
- *IDC Training Sub-Committee Meeting* at 10am at NOAH on May 18th
- *IDC Community Awareness and Public Policy Subcommittee Meeting* at 10am at ICJI on May 22nd
- *State of Our Black Youth – Indianapolis Subcommittee Meeting* at 10am at Wishard on May 23rd

For exact meeting addresses please contact Devina at djani@cji.in.gov